

# The History of *Religionswissenschaft* in Hungary, 1860–1990

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## 1 Introductory Remarks

The present study<sup>1</sup> is the first attempt at a systematic account of the history of Religious Studies in Hungary. Its aim is to provide a historical overview of the distinct periods and the most significant proponents of the discipline practised in Hungary. The study distinguishes four periods within the history of the social sciences in Hungary: liberal, nationalist, atheist and pluralist. It will also provide a short biography, bibliography and summary of the views of the representative authors in the Hungarian history of Religious Studies.

The reason why we have opted to use the German expression *Religionswissenschaft* for Religious Studies in the title is that up until the 1960s the discipline was primarily identified as German, and the German foundation continues today to be seen as a significant marker of the discipline's first hundred years. One needs only to remember that at the founding session of the American Society for the Study of Religion (in 1959, April 18) Erwin R. Goodenough entitled his lecture "*Religionswissenschaft*".<sup>2</sup>

Before we present a summary of our data on the history of Religious Studies in Hungary, it is important to offer some comments on its limitations. Historical research on the discipline in Hungary started only a few years ago, on the initiative of the present authors.<sup>3</sup> Since the academic history of the discipline is merely fifteen years old, it is no wonder, nor cause for shame, that we are presenting here merely the first results of the study, and especially of the analysis of the data.

1 This research was supported by the European Union and the State of Hungary, co-financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of TÁMOP 4.2.4. A/2-11-1-2012-0001 'National Excellence Program'.

2 Reinhard Pummer, "Recent publications on the methodology of the science of religion," *Numen* 22: 3 (1975): 161–82; Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, "Religionswissenschaft," *Numen* 6, (1959): 77–95.

3 Csaba Máté Sarnyai and András Máté-Tóth ed., *Jeles szerzők 1860–1920 Szemelvények a magyar vallástudomány történetéből I.* (Szeged: Belvedere, 2009). *Sociology of Religion in Hungary* by Tomka, and *Ethnology of religion* by Barna.

There are three considerations which have been taken into account in structuring the presentation of our material. Firstly, in charting the history of Religious Studies in Hungary we will not proceed from the periods of the international history of the discipline, but, rather, work in terms of the distinctive periods in Hungarian social and academic history. Secondly, at least a few representative scholars will be included from each period, even though a comprehensive view is not yet available for all the historical periods in question. Finally, from the works presented in this study, those features in Hungarian *Religionswissenschaft* have been highlighted which can be paralleled and compared with the contemporary work of the internationally significant figures in the history of Religious Studies. This was especially appropriate since the oeuvre of the Hungarian scholars—with the exception of perhaps Ignác Goldziher and Károly (Carl) Kerényi—has so far been only partially processed.

These factors account for our present inability to present a comprehensive history of Hungarian Religious Studies. The primary goal of our further research is to identify all the significant individuals in Religious Studies from each of the four periods in the history of science, compile a bibliography of primary and secondary literature, and publish a collection of their most characteristic writings.<sup>4</sup> Only after this initial work of compilation and systematization will it become possible to make comprehensive statements about the discipline's Hungarian history, to explore its features and specifics in international comparative perspective, and to assess the uniqueness of the individual authors and the spirituality of certain scientific schools and scholarly trends.

However, until we reach our final goal, there is no restriction on disclosing the research progress itself, as long as we clearly delineate the conditions and frames within which our present data and statements are to be interpreted. Naturally, the Hungarian history of Religious Studies has to be examined within the context of the discipline's international history, and in the following, we will therefore begin from a survey of some of cardinal points of the latter.

### 1.1 *The History of Science Perspective*

The history of science is a sub-discipline of history, exploring the origin, the development and the proponents of various perspectives, ideas, and key concepts in academic research. History of science operates by collecting and systematizing relevant data, with the aim of identifying the philosophical and social causes and consequences of shifts in scientific interest. The emergence of Religious Studies was initially facilitated by philosophical and social

4 At the time of this article's completion the first volume has already been published, the second volume is being edited, its publication anticipated in November 2013.

conditions of the Enlightenment, since these provided a theoretical framework allowing for a descriptive and comparative reflection on religions. Religious studies as a branch of science, and as a particular approach distinct from theology and philosophy, goes back to Friedrich Max Müller, who, following the logic of comparative linguists, introduced the discourse of the discipline.<sup>5</sup> Müller, an Indologist, exercised a major impact not only on the European reception of Indian culture, with his grand collection of the *Sacred Books of the East*, but also on the scientific approach to Hinduism as a religion. He advocated the comparative Religious Studies approach with great enthusiasm and powerful argumentation, emphasizing that this approach should offend neither the (motivated) bias of believers towards their own religion, nor the autonomy of theological discourse. The initial period in the history of Religious Studies launched by Müller dealt primarily with the cultures of distant continents, searching for and reconstructing their myths. Müller framed the primary task of this science by arguing for the possibility of classifying the provenance of religions in parallel with that the manner of languages.

The mapping of the history of Religious Studies in the international context typically utilizes several related, but clearly distinct approaches, which also provide the theoretical background of our work. One research approach catalogues the institutions of Religious Studies in the order of their foundation. There are a number of studies in existence recording the histories of famous and significant departments of Religious Studies. One such widely used work with an institutional perspective is Sigurd Hejlde's seminal book, published in 1994, surveying the first decades of the discipline while addressing the question of how the Religious Studies approach diverges from theological inquiry.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the first volume of the handbook edited by Hubert Cancik et al. catalogues in chronological order the most significant institutions of Religious Studies in each country.<sup>7</sup>

Another approach to the history of science primarily emphasizes the classic works of scholarship in the discipline. *Classical approaches to the study of religion*, by the Dutch scholar of Islam, Jacques Waardenburg, published in 1974,

5 Max Müller, *Essays* (Leipzig: Liebkecht-Fritzsche, 1869) and *Einleitung in die vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* (Strassburg: Trübner, 1874).

6 Sigurd Hejlde, *Die Religionswissenschaft und das Christentum. Eine historische Untersuchung über das Verhältnis von Religionswissenschaft und Theologie* (Leiden-NewYork-Köln: E.J. Brill, 1994).

7 Hubert Cancik, Burkhard Gladigow and Matthias Samuel Laubscher ed., *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe I–V*. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1988–1993).

was the first such compendium of scholarly approaches to Religious Studies.<sup>8</sup> At the book's outset, the author provides a historical overview of the discipline's nineteenth-century origins, and then goes on to discuss the most significant topics addressed in Religious Studies, lists its major proponents, and illustrates their positions by short extracts from their work. The same approach is utilized in the compilation *Klassiker der Religionswissenschaft* (1997) edited by Axel Michaels.<sup>9</sup> His work focuses on twenty-three significant authors spanning the period from Schleiermacher to Eliade, with their biographies and summaries of the prominent aspects of their work by contemporary German scholars. Walter Capps has compiled a similar compendium analyzing five significant issues in the scholarly approaches to Religious Studies, and providing a chronological list of authors most significant for the approaches discussed.<sup>10</sup>

Influenced by debates within historiography, in Modernity the interest in history underwent a radical shift: "history" as then construed was an attempt to answer the questions which Modernity raised. In terms of history of Religious Studies, this shift was first reflected by Hans G. Kippenberg,<sup>11</sup> who argued that the construction of "religion" fits this general scheme of searching for answers to questions about life, man, culture and the meaning of life, and finding them through the examination of the history of a range of religions and cultures. History and religion are not an *a priori* reality, but are the creation of authors and schools embedded within the philosophy of a given age. In this sense, the task of religious history is to expose the connections and tensions between perceptions of religion in different historical eras and regions, and between the cultural, social and political demands of their contemporary contexts.

## 1.2 *Periodization*

There are several options for the periodisation of the history of Religious Studies in Hungary. Since there is as yet no detailed survey of the discipline's

8 Jacques Waardenburg, *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion: Aims, Methods and Theories of Research. Introduction and Anthology* (New York, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999).

9 Axel Michaels, *Klassiker der Religionswissenschaft. Von Friedrich Schleiermacher bis Mircea Eliade* (München: C.H. Beck, 1997).

10 Walter H. Capps, *Religious studies: the making of a discipline* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

11 Hans G. Kippenberg, "Diskursive Religionswissenschaft. Gedanken zu einer Religionswissenschaft, die weder auf einer allgemein gültigen Definition von Religion noch auf einer Überlegenheit von Wissenschaft basiert." in *Neue Ansätze in der Religionswissenschaft*, ed. Burkhard Gladigow and Hans G. Kippenberg (München: Kösel, 1983), 9–28; Hans G. Kippenberg, *Die Entdeckung der Religionsgeschichte. Religionswissenschaft und Moderne* (München: C.H. Beck, 1997).

Hungarian history, it will be useful to list the various alternative perspectives from which it might be represented. In the following, we will showcase four such possibilities. Although the article will follow a social-sciences periodisation, other possibilities will be outlined as well, since they might inspire further research.

### 1.2.1 Formal—Social Science Periodisation

The following sketch outlines significant features of the periods in political and social history within which Hungarian scholarship, including Religious Studies, developed, since the approach to religion, to certain specific religious denominations, and to believers was largely shaped in Central and Eastern Europe during the last century and a half by political goals and ideologies.

## 2 The Liberal Period 1860–1920

Historically, the liberal period starts with the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and concludes with the end of the First World War and the dismemberment of the pre-war Kingdom of Hungary in the Treaty of Trianon<sup>12</sup> (1920). From the perspective of legal history, the period was marked by struggles around the separation of church and state. From the socio-historical perspective, increasing urbanization during this period is usually assumed to have facilitated the spread of religious indifference.

Following the Compromise, legal parity was established in Hungary between the recognized denominations (Roman Catholic, Reformed/Presbyterian, Evangelical/Lutheran, Unitarian, and Eastern Orthodox). From the cultural and educational point of view, this primarily impacted on the Catholic Church, which had previously enjoyed priority of status. The provision of State-supported public education and denomination-free higher education played an important role in this process of separation. As a consequence of the struggle between State and Church, the civil registration of marriage became in the eye of the State solely a legal act, not a religious one. The same secularization is reflected in a shift from the denominationally-tinted loyalty of the previous centuries to a secular, civic loyalty. The emancipation of the Jewish religion was also part of this process, and it now became possible for an individual to hold citizenship without denominational affiliation. These far-reaching

12 Signed in Versailles, France in 1920, the Treaty of Trianon concluded WWI. By its terms, Hungary lost some 72% of its geographical territory and inhabitants and the treaty therefore became a seed of much resentment and ethnic conflict.

changes went in parallel with more general processes of European modernization, the German *Kulturkampf* model having a special impact on Hungary.

### 3 The National Period 1920–1950

Both the political and cultural life of this period in Hungary were crucially shaped by the Trianon trauma. Besides losing two thirds of its territory, Hungary also lost four million inhabitants of Hungarian ethnicity and identity. The political response to this trauma was the institutionalization of an ideal of the Christian Nation-State,<sup>13</sup> while the cultural response emphasized Hungarian cultural supremacy over the Carpathian Basin, which essentially meant that Hungarians saw themselves as the primary culture-creating factors for this region. (One can recognize a similar, although far more influential, earlier notion of cultural supremacy in the case of the English.) The increase of financial grants to support Hungarian cultural and scientific achievements, as well as modern sciences, is closely connected with this idea of the Hungarian cultural role. As elsewhere in Europe, the racial issue was widely discussed in public debate and within the humanities, its most extreme embodiment being the anti-Semitism present rather more than less in the majority of countries of the region. The development of education and science was driven by the idea of “intellectual national defence” (*Geistige Landesverteidigung*), which, however, did not imply ideological autonomy for the sciences. This was to become one of the most significant features of the next period.

### 4 The Atheistic Period 1950–1990

The end of World War II in 1945 brought the previous era in political history to an end, and the period 1945–1948 was marked by the gradual takeover by the Communist Party. During these years, cultural and scientific life was still relatively free, and not yet permeated by ideological bias. In 1948, however, Hungary became a single-party state governed by the autocratic Communist party, and Marxist materialism became its exclusive ideology.

13 András Máté-Tóth, “Nemzet—kereszténység—erkölcs. Adalékok a keresztény nemzeti gondolkodás jelenéhez,” *Valóság* 36, no. 9 (1993): 44–57; András Máté-Tóth, *Szent nemzet. A nacionalizmus mint civil vallás Kelet-Közép-Európában. Úton. Tanulmányok Tomka Miklós tiszteletére, Hegedűs Rita és Révay Edit* (Szeged: SZTE Vallástudományi Tanszék, 2007), 153–68.

This third period can be termed as the period of institutionalized atheism, when an atheist ideology with a semi-religious character became interwoven with political strategy. It must be distinguished from the period of secularization in Western Europe, which primarily manifested itself in a shift in personal religiosity and in a growing reserve towards religious institutions. The history of the Eastern Bloc—i.e. the European region controlled by the Soviet Union and its Communist Party—shows how the philosophy of Marxism developed by Lenin, Stalin and other communist dictators came to be applied by historians and social scientists. Communism as an ideology saw in religion its principal ideological enemy, and therefore maintained as one of its primary goals the systematic eradication of religion, in all its institutions and manifestations. The Communist Party systematically utilized academic institutions in pursuit of this goal. Consequently, the Communist regime was openly hostile to academic theology; nevertheless it supported Religious Studies, provided scholars were willing to adhere to a Marxist critique of religion.

From this period on, theology ceased to play any important role in the history of Religious Studies in Hungary. The regime hampered scholarly theological work by all possible means, but tolerated and occasionally supported critical secular work dealing with religions. Researchers working in these workshops had access to journals, and were allowed to participate in Western European conferences and in the work of professional networks.

The most significant venues for practising Religious Studies in this period were the Philosophical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the philosophical journal, *Világosság* [*Light/Lucidity*], edited by the members of the Institute. Articles on Religious Studies were published in the journal with relative regularity, and with time the constant paeans of praise of Marxism also abated.

Nevertheless, to represent this period in terms of a dichotomy between prosecuted and fettered theology on the one hand and State-supported Religious Studies on the other would be misleading. Several scholars had already found an inspiring field for their research in Religious Studies even before 1950, and with the advent of the Communist regime, they were to a certain extent able to retain their academic status, although they were obliged to more or less publicly acknowledge Marxist ideology. It is therefore not rare to find, in the prefaces of sound academic works, or in chapters clearly separated from the rest of the scholarly text, passages in deference to Marxist authors, written in humiliation. Back then these were the *sine qua non* conditions of publication, while today they are mementoes of a sad period in the history of science.

The forty years period sketchily termed here the “atheist period” was far from homogeneous. From the 1970s onwards, Communist control and propaganda



steadily decreased, as is illustrated by the relaxing of the strict censorship of scientific papers dealing with religion. The end of this process is marked by the publication in 1987 of the Hungarian translation of Eliade's *The sacred and profane* (*Szent és profane*).

## 5 The Pluralist Period 1990–

The political shift triggered by the collapse of the Communist regimes has fundamentally re-ordered political and social relations in Hungary, including the framework and direction of the sciences. More than twenty years after the political transformation, and in accordance with the region's general experience, social and cultural life in Hungary is today characterized by pluralism of recollection and innovation, and in the sciences Hungary is influenced above all by globalization and the information revolution.

### 5.1 *Thematic Periodisation*

The Hungarian history of Religious Studies can be also mapped in the context of and in relation to the most significant issues of Religious Studies in international scholarship. The relevant contexts include: comparative linguistics, folk religion (ethnic and regional religion), modern biblical scholarship, interest in overseas cultures, theoretical issues within Religious Studies, and the challenge of atheism, so typical for the region and for Hungary itself.

The early Hungarian history of the study of religions is primarily characterized by research interest in cultures outside Europe and in the religiosity of folk/ethnic groups. These research interests had their roots in issues of national identity and racial kinship. The awareness of Hungarian connections to Central Asian and Far Eastern peoples and cultures resulted in works that, although they fall short of the scholarly standards of modern science and scholarship, were nonetheless valuable and indispensable as sources for later work. First of all, we should recall here the travels of Sándor Kőrösi-Csoma (*alias* Alexander Csoma de Kőrös) to China and Tibet. Sándor Kőrösi-Csoma (1784 [or possibly 1787 or 1788]–1842) was a linguist, and the founder of Tibetan philology.<sup>14</sup> After completing his studies at Bethlenianum, the Protestant college in Nagyenyed, he taught there for a while. Thanks to an English scholarship, in 1816 he left to study oriental languages at the University of Göttingen. Already as a student he decided to trace the “Asian Hungarians (Magyars)”. He set out on foot in the autumn of 1819, and reached Tibet; and during 1823–24,

14 Ervin Baktay, *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor* (Budapest: Tálentum, 1999).



living in privation, he worked out the foundations of Tibetan grammar. Between 1825–1826 he worked at the Pukhtal monastery, and later (1827–1830) in Kanam, supplementing his studies, and completing the first published Tibetan grammar (*A Grammar of the Tibetan Language in English*) and a Tibetan-English dictionary (*Essay towards a Dictionary Tibetan and English*), both published in Calcutta in 1834. These two works were seminal for the study of oriental languages, and represent important milestones not merely for Hungarian but for international scholarship. Altogether Sándor Kőrösi-Csoma compiled glossaries of sixteen European and Oriental languages. In 1842 he set out again for Tibet, but died of malaria on his way through the Terai region.

Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913), one of the major and prominent figures of Hungarian Turkology, is also worth mentioning.<sup>15</sup> He completed no more than six years of secondary schooling, and his achievements stemmed not from an academic education, but from his desire for adventure and from his gift in languages. His interest in the Near East and its languages was spurred by his acquaintance with Baron Hammer-Purgstall, the famous Orientalist. In 1857 Vámbéry embarked on his first voyage to Istanbul.

In 1862 he published the *Abuska*, a Turkish-Chagatai dictionary, from a manuscript obtained in Istanbul.<sup>16</sup> In the same year he set off on his second journey to the Middle East, where he studied the origins of the Hungarians, their connection to the Turkic peoples, and the history and development of the Central Asian nations through Islam. For three years Vámbéry traveled disguised as a dervish. Being the first European to undertake such a journey, the greatest value of his travel was his knowledge and the first-hand experience. His accounts of these travels made Ármin Vámbéry world famous, and there was a great international reaction to his findings, for at that time not many Europeans had conducted research in Central Asia. In 1882 he published a book entitled *A magyarok eredete* [*Origin of the Magyars*]. The principal idea of the work is that the Hungarians (Magyars) have mixed Finno-Ugric and Turkish origin; he did not accept the argument that the Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarian language also necessitates the origin of the people. The ensuing controversy became known as the “Ugric-Turkish war”.

Gyula Germanus (1884–1979), Vámbéry’s disciple, continued in the same line of research. Similarly to his master, his works are predominantly records of his travels. It was Germanus and Vámbéry who revealed the depths of Islamic

15 Lory Alder and Richard Dalby, *The Dervish of Windsor Castle: The Life of Arminius Vámbéry*, (London: Bachman-Turner, 1979).

16 *Abuska csagatáj-török szógyűjtemény, fordította Vámbéry Ármin, XVIII. sz.-i kéziratból dolgozva* (Pest: Emich, 1862).

culture, society and religion to European scholarship. Germanus's autobiographical travelogue *Allah Akbar*, first published in 1936, is at the same time a religious and historical survey initiating the reader into the religion and culture of the Islamic world, and a survey of the geographical and historical features of India, Arabia and Egypt, describing their sacred places, the everyday life of the people, and also discussing linguistic issues.

Nevertheless, the early history of Hungarian Religious Studies is not limited to Oriental studies alone. Rather, they merely indicate a significant feature; a feature that is probably traceable in the history of Hungarian philosophy, and literature too, the traces whereof we have yet not pursued. (Hence, we have not yet dealt with eighteenth-century protestant writers whose works centred on the Bible such as, for example, Péter Brod's *Szent Bibliának históriája* [*The history of the Holy Bible*], published in 1748 in Szeben).

These travelling scholars gathered their materials prior to the establishment of scholarly criteria for Religious Studies (for example in the systematization of approaches to the study of religion outlined in Joachim Wach's *Prolegomena*) that required an ethical distancing from the religion under scrutiny. Germanus in fact became a Muslim, took up a Muslim name and followed the tenets and requirement of the religion in his everyday life. And yet, he described his subtle observations with a European context in mind, continually comparing his experiences of the Eastern culture with those of the West, yet without evaluating the former by Christian standards. In this sense his work already conforms to the methodological demands of Religious Studies, namely, that no religion can be measured or valued against another religion's system of doctrine and practice.

The international history of Religious Studies is usually seen as dating from Max Müller, who built his comparative religion on the pattern of comparative linguistics. His work was closely followed by Hungarian philologists. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences elected him an honorary member in 1874, although not in recognition of his Religious Studies research, but on the merit of his lifelong linguistic achievements. At the same time, however, the *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny* [*Universal Philological Bulletin*] (1887–1948) published reviews of his most significant works on religion. The *Bulletin's* publications concerning Religious Studies were processed and analyzed by Attila Sáfrány.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the beginnings of the ethnographic study of folk religion<sup>17</sup> were producing their seminal research results. In his work

17 On the history of the study of the Hungarian folk religion and its main issues see *Magyar Néprajz*, vol. 7.

*Magyar Mythológia* [Hungarian Mythology]<sup>18</sup> (1854), the Catholic priest Arnold Ipolyi (1823–1886) attempted to reconstruct the pre-Christian beliefs of the Hungarians, referring to them as mythologies. He did not rely merely on historical sources, but studied folk religion and oral traditions as well, which gives his work a revolutionary significance in terms of methodology. Quoting the authority of Mihály Hoppál, Gábor Barna writes: “*Magyar Mythológia* is a seminal work in comparative Hungarian folkloristics, and at the same time in comparative mythology research.”<sup>19</sup>

## 5.2 *The History of Reception Approach*

Another way to approach the history of the discipline in Hungary is to trace the reception of the great figures of Religious Studies. Waardenburg, as we mentioned before, categorizes the classic authors and works of Religious Studies into different groups. Although there are no detailed data on the Hungarian reception of all the authors listed by Waardenburg, it can nevertheless be said that the wider reception of these authors in Hungary was only rudimentary. However, a scientific evaluation of these works by the founding authors of Religious Studies is continuously present in the works of Hungarian scholars of that period. The case of Max Müller was already mentioned, even if Hungarian scholars were primarily interested in his linguistic achievements. His lectures on the science of language were translated into Hungarian soon after their original publication,<sup>20</sup> whereas his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (London, 1873) was obtainable merely in original editions (English and German) and only in few larger libraries in Hungary (and one still cannot find Tiele or Chantepie de la Saussaye there, not even in their original languages).

Given the central cultural theme of the liberal period, it is not surprising that Renan's work was translated into Hungarian, and published in Vienna, as early as 1864. *Apostolok* [Apostles] was published in 1866, and *A kereszténység története* [History of Christianity] appeared at the end of the century (1897–1899) in Balassa-Gyarmat. Before the Hungarian publication of his *Life of Jesus*

18 Kabos Kandra published a book with the same title in 1897 in Eger, and, although, critically referencing to Ipolyi's work in detail (1–7), he regarded his own work as an independent achievement, wrought on new foundations. The analysis of the differences between the two author's approaches is beyond the scope of this article.

19 Gábor Barna, *Ethnology of Religion: Chapters from the European History of a Discipline* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2004), 129.

20 The Hungarian translation of Müller's linguistic lectures was commissioned by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the 1870s. The first lecture was translated out of the English edition by Zsigmond Steiner, while the following lectures were translated, also from English, by Zsigmond Simonyi—*trans.*

[*Jézus élete*] there were already Hungarian translations of the criticism of the work in other foreign languages (Mór Ballagi, *Renaniána*, 1864). The end of the 1920s saw the Hungarian edition of a number of Renan's works, all of them translated by Ernő Salgó and published within one year, 1928, in Pest: *A keresztény egyház* [*The Christian Church*], *Antikrisztus* [*Antichrist*], and *Az evangéliumok és a második keresztény nemzedék* [*The Gospels and the Second Generation of Christians*].

Works by prominent authors on the historical interpretation of the Bible were already available in Hungarian for those interested by the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, Wellhausen's *History of Israel* was published in 1886,<sup>21</sup> but the Hungarian translation of Wellhausen's work on the Pharisees and Sadducees appeared as late as in 2001 (*A farizeusok és szadduceusok*, trans. by Csaba Szabó). Friedrich Delitzsch's lecture "Babel and Bible" was translated and published in 1903 (*Babylonia és Biblia*).

Fustel de Coulanges's *La cité antique* (1864) was translated into Hungarian by Antal Bartal as *Az ókori község: tanulmány a görög és a római vallásról, jogról és intézményekről* [*The Ancient Community: A Study in Greek and Roman religion, law and institutions*] in 1883. However, a selection of Johann Jakob Bachofen's works was published almost a hundred years later in 1978 under the title *Mitosz és az ősi társadalom* [*Myth and ancient society*].

Contemporary Hungarian psychologists of religion do refer to William James, but his seminal work in the field, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, has not yet been translated into Hungarian. Freud's *Totem and Taboo* appeared in Hungarian as early as 1918 (*Totem és tabu*), and *The Future of an Illusion* was published in 1945 (*Egy illúzió jövője*). However, his *Moses and Monotheism* appeared only in 1987 (Mózes). Before the political shift in 1987, none of the works of Carl Gustav Jung relevant for Religious Studies had been published in Hungarian.<sup>22</sup>

The classic of the sociology of religion, Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, was translated and published in Hungarian (*A protestáns etika és a kapitalizmus szelleme*) by Sándor Vida as early as 1924 (the first English translation appearing six years later), but his work on the sociology of religion appeared only recently in 2005, under the title *Vallásszociológia: a*

21 Julius Wellhausen, *Izráel népének története Jeruzsálem második pusztulásáig*. The Hungarian translation was made from the article "Israel" by Wellhausen published in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and later reprinted in Wellhausen's *Prolegomena*.

22 Carl Gustav Jung, *Válasz Jób könyvére* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995); *Gondolatok a vallásról és a kereszténységről* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1996); *A nyugati és a keleti vallások lélektanáról* (Budapest: Scolar Kiadó, 2005).

*vallási közösségek típusai* [*Sociology of Religion: Types of Religious Communities*] translated and annotated by Ágnes Erdélyi.<sup>23</sup> A selection from his *Sociology of the World Religions* was first published in 2007 under the title *Világvallások gazdasági etikája: vallásszociológiai tanulmányok* [*Economic Ethics of the World Religions: Studies in the Sociology of Religion*] (edited by Zoltán Hidas).

It is only in the last two decades that the works of classical authors defining schools and trends within Religious Studies, and indispensable for the understanding of the discipline and its history, have been published in Hungarian.<sup>24</sup>

The works of some authors from Waardenburg's list relating to other fields were surveyed by Hungarian scholars of the relevant fields, but their studies in religion rarely merited an emphasis proportionate to the presence of the topic in their oeuvres.

### 5.3 *History of Institutions Approach*

As already mentioned, the history of Religious Studies is often recorded by mapping the history of relevant institutions of Religious Studies, and the local history of the discipline by its scholars and research projects. Due to the conjunction of various circumstances, the first Hungarian institution specifically

23 The translation is of a stand-alone chapter from Weber's seminal work *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology* ("Religious Groups"). The chapter appeared in this stand-alone form in its English translation too, as *The Sociology of Religion* (trans. by Ephraim Fischhoff; Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

24 The Hungarian translation of Albert Schweitzer's *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest* (*Az orvos az őserdőben*) follows closely the original German edition, however, none of his works relevant to Religious Studies were published. Several of Herbert Spencer's works on ethics and education had been published in Hungary, but not his *Principles of Sociology*. Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* (*A szent*) in 1997; Gennep's work on rites of passage, the "Les rites de passage" was originally published in 1909, while its Hungarian translation appeared almost a hundred years later in 2007; Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (*A vallási élet elemi formái*) was published in 2003-ban, although, his other, in terms of Religious Studies less significant, works appeared in translation 20–30 years earlier; Marcel Mauss' *Sociologie et anthropologie* (*Szociológia és antropológia*) in 2000-ben; Leeuw's *Phänomenologie der Religion* (*A vallás fenomenológiája*) in 2001-ben; the Lum & Kristensen & Davies edited *Jesus one of us* (*Az ember Krisztus/Jézus: bibliai tanulmányok Jézus Krisztus személyéről*) was published as a denominational publication in 1987, and later at Harmat in 2004-ben; Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown's *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (*Struktúra és funkció a primitív társadalomban*) in 2004. Exception to this late realization is Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (*Aranyág*) published in Hungary in 1965 or the selection of Malinowski's articles, entitled *Baloma*, published in 1972.

devoted to Religious Studies was not founded until 2000, at the University of Szeged, and up to the completion of this manuscript it is still the only Department of Religious Studies in the country. Although it would be interesting and important to list the individuals and to analyze the arguments promoting the founding of such department in the last 150 years, and even more so, the circumstances and reasons why these were thwarted, it remains a task for future research.

#### 5.4 *Prominent Authors*

The following arrangement of authors into certain periods has not been primarily made on the basis of their biographical data, but rather, on the publication dates of their works genuinely relevant to our study.

### 6 The International Features of the Beginnings of the Discipline

Following Müller's initiative, in the second half of the nineteenth century there began a whole range of research into the phenomenology of religion, which thus became a recognized differentiated branch of study alongside the already well-established discipline of history of religion. One merely needs to mention the historian of antiquity C.P. Tiele (*Elements of the Science of Religion* 1–2 [Gifford Lectures], Edinburgh and London: 1897–99) and the protestant theologian Chantepie de la Saussaye, whose interest lay predominantly in methodological questions (*Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* 1–2, Göttingen: 1887–89). These authors and their colleagues were Husserl's contemporaries. Husserl's epistemology offers a powerful tool to examine religion from an unbiased perspective, allowing a perception in which things otherwise obscured can reveal themselves to the researcher. This approach, called phenomenological reduction by Husserl, allows the scholar of Religious Studies a distance that is a precondition for the scholar to construct the metaconception called religion based on particular data of religious history.

Another important theme in the first century of existence of Religious Studies is the study of the history of the Bible, pioneered by two prominent scholars, Julius Wellhausen and William Robertson Smith (*The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* [London, 1881]), both of whom focused on the history of Judaism. Wellhausen particularly breached a theological and church taboo by showing how the narratives of the Pentateuch do not follow a chronological order but a different logic (*Die Komposition des Hexateuchus und der historischen Bücher des AT* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1883]). This



suggestion, coming in a modernist era already undermining the veracity of the Bible, was met with immense opposition from theologians and church leaders, which subsequently led to Wellhausen abandoning his theological vocation.

Around the turn of the 20th century, following the interrogation and reconstruction of the concepts of history and religion, the idea of society was also re-constructed, spurring the development of sociological examinations of the social significance of religion by authors such as Emile Durkheim (*Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* [*Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Paris, 1912]), Max Weber (*Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* 1–3 [*Collected Essays on the Sociology of Religion*, Tübingen, 1922–26]) and Ernst Troeltsch (*Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirche und Gruppen* [*The Social Doctrine of the Christian Church*, Tübingen, 1912]). Following and parallel with Sigmund Freud (*Die Zukunft einer Illusion* [*The Future of an Illusion*, 1927]), William James (*The Varieties of Religious Experience* [New York, 1902]), James H. Leuba (*A Psychological Study of Religion: Its Origin, Function and Future* [New York, 1912]), and Edwin Starbuck (*The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness* [London, 1899]) turned to examining the psychological manifestation of religion, and thus became the founders of psychology of religion.

We might observe three main features in this initial stage of the study of religion. The first is the growing independence of the discipline not only from theology, but also from philosophy and from historiography. It can also be observed how in the second half of the nineteenth century a general need for supports and proof by data and experiments filters in from the natural sciences into the modes of argumentation deployed in the humanities. Consistently with this trend, the study of religion also develops its own theory and methodology. Other approaches to religion, other perspectives on religious phenomena, broaden and diversify the topics for research. The second main feature of this period is the Christian background of most of the scholars, and in many instances their theological, denominational involvement. In the second half of the century, however, there is a strong repression of the significance or validity of church, faith and theology, and scholars involved in Religious Studies in this period tend to stand upon the broader ground of Christianity's cultural and moral values. Although they come to conclusions significantly differing from those of the traditional denominational-theological approach, they do not give up on their standing regarding Christianity and faith. Finally, the third main feature of the nineteenth-century study of religion is its social and religious-political commitment. Prominent authors of the era conducted their research with the period's main questions on their mind, believing that their research results might offer relevant and constructive answers to those questions.



## 7 The Liberal Period

The Reformed theologian Ödön Kovács (1844–1895) studied theology at Nagyenyed (at Aiud in Alba county, Transylvania), and later at the Universities of Utrecht and Leiden. In 1869 he published a series of articles on the study of religions, voicing a stance almost parallel with the birth of Religious Studies in the West. In his works Kovács emphasizes careful scholarship, and strives to develop a theology free of bias, with Religious Studies providing its framework. He considered Religious Studies a branch of theology, and saw its place as a reforming element within theology. Kovács scrutinized religious study with erudition, anatomizing and analyzing religions and the religious individual. Kovács's initial premise is that a science taught in academia should conform to the methodology of academic work and to experimental examination. Contemporary theology, argued Kovács, did not conform to these criteria, first, because its object was a God whose being is beyond the realm of knowledge and experience, and, second, because the various denominational theologies claim to satisfy all the spiritual needs of the religious individual, whereas the object of religious study is man as a religious being and religion itself, and the goal of Religious Studies is to get to know and understand these topics, not God. Religious studies conforms to academic criteria, for it builds on experience, and its tools are examination, description, classification, systematization and the formulation of laws ruling the observed phenomena.

Kovács perceives man as a fundamentally spiritual being, since although one might deny God and the spirit as objective realities, one cannot deny that man believes and owns a 'spiritual dimension', which he sees as the foundation of the study of religion.

Kovács's particular merit lies in his attempt to systematize Religious Studies. Referring to Schleiermacher, he includes statistics in empirical Religious Studies, because it illuminates the social and communal relations of a given religion, the knowledge of which is useful also to the churches. Thus, he surmises, the philosophical part of Religious Studies answers the question of what religion is, and its method is the gathering of the ideas common in all forms of religion. Its course is threefold: it looks for concepts and ideas as these are manifested firstly in deities, secondly in forms of prayer, and thirdly in prescriptions and proscriptions. The humanities mode of Religious Studies, on the other hand, tries to decide whether religious ideas and notions rest on truth or on identifiable human needs. Here, however, Ödön Kovács swerves from the scientific approach by making value judgments about religions (i.e. to what extent they are true or false). He also links the examination of different worship forms and liturgy to the humanities approach, as well as the question of

the comparability of divine figures, and the criticism and interpretation of eschatological concepts.

Ignác Goldziher (1850–1921), Orientalist, Islamist, Hebraist, was the founder of Semitic Philology and Arabic studies in Hungary. From 1865 to 1868 he was a special student at the University in Pest, studying Turkish and Persian philology under Ármin Vámbéry. In 1869 he received a state scholarship and attended the University of Vienna, but also studied at the University of Leipzig between 1869 and 1870, where he received his doctorate in philosophy in 1870. In 1872 he was qualified as a *Privatdozent* when only 22 years old. He studied classical philology, history of philosophy, linguistics, Oriental Studies and Hungarian philology. With a scholarship granted by the state, he made a journey to the Middle East between 1873–1874, studying Semitic languages and Islamic religion in Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo. From 1874 he was Secretary of the Jewish Community in Pest. He was also the founder of the Jewish Theological Institute, where he taught philosophy of religion between the years 1900–1921. From 1872 he was also a *Privatdozent* at the University of Budapest, where he was installed as Professor in 1904. His *Az Iszlám. Tanulmányok a mohamedán vallás köréből* [*Islam. Studies of Mohammedan Religion*], published in 1881, laid the grounds for an Islamic historiography operating with critical methodology. The more outstanding results of his Islamic research, cementing his international recognition, were later published in a German series of lectures, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, published in 1910, translated into Hungarian and published in 1912 (*Előadások az Iszlámról*).<sup>25</sup> One significant feature of his methodology was the simultaneous presentation of the sources about the predecessors of Islam, its development and further progress, alongside with their interpretations. His oeuvre comprises 380 individual works and 210 reviews. In 1876 the Hungarian Academy of Sciences elected him a corresponding member, and in 1893 a full member of the Academy. In 1889 he received a gold medal at the Stockholm Oriental Congress. He was elected as a member in eight foreign Academies, among others the Russian (1897), the Dutch (1908), the Prussian (1910), the Bavarian (1916), the Spanish, the Danish, and the British.

25 Goldziher prepared the German text in response to an invitation to deliver a series of lectures on Islam in America. Deterred by an illness, Goldziher never delivered those lectures in person, but decided to publish them in a book. Hence, the German edition was published in 1910. The English translation was published in 1917 by Yale University Press, although Goldziher was not satisfied with the translation (Smith 182). Later, Goldziher's work was translated again by Andras and Ruth Hamori, edited and bibliographically updated by Bernard Lewis, and published by Princeton University Press in 1981.—note by the translator.

He was made a honorary doctor of two universities, of Cambridge (1904) and of Aberdeen (1906). He was one of the greatest scholars of Islam studies in his age.

Ignác Goldziher published a number of studies introducing the study of religion, especially at the beginning of his academic career. He viewed the study of religion as the corollary of comparative mythology,<sup>26</sup> and associated the origin of this science with Max Müller. Goldziher described comparative Religious Studies as a new discipline, but not quite: it is not new in terms of its questions and problems, which had already been raised by Aristotle, Spinoza, Hume and Hegel. Religious Studies, however, is a new science in terms of its methodology, when we consider how those previously raised questions and problems were examined by Müller, and on what knowledge he based those examinations. The comparative study of religion does not stem from a single religion, but from *religions*. The comparative study of religion developed from comparative mythology, and in terms of its methodology it builds upon comparative linguistics and upon psychology.

Goldziher's fundamental assumption was that religions developed from myths. Therefore, he argued that the task of comparative Religious Studies was to demonstrate how certain mythic elements developed into religious ideas; to elucidate how ideas describing natural phenomena developed into names of deities, how polytheism came into being, how it later developed into dualism and henotheism, and how these developed into monotheism. Religious Studies should also attempt to trace how psychological laws were at work in the historical development of religions, how ethical elements were connected to theistic ideas, and what roles the founders of religion played in the development of particular religions. Literary religious texts, and their ethnographically demonstrable specifics, were the primary sources for research. He also argued that historically traceable changes within religions were not attributed to arbitrary influences, but were the results of regular processes of evolution. Accordingly, Goldziher considered polytheism, henotheism and monotheism to be mandatory phases in any religion's development. Finally, the discovered laws could assist the scholar in explaining the facts.

Ambró Czakó, also known as Ambrosius Czakó (1887–1974), was a philosopher of religion and arts and a university professor. In 1902 he joined the Cistercian order, and studied mathematics, physics and philosophy at

26 Ignác Goldziher, "Az összehasonlító vallástudomány módszeréről," *M. Tanügy* (1878): 171–86. It was reprinted under the same title in András Máté-Tóth and Csaba Máté Sarnyai ed. *Jeles szerzők 1860–1920 Szemelvények a magyar vallástudomány történetéből I* (Szeged: Belvedere, 2009), 38–50.

the universities of Vienna, Freiburg and Budapest. In 1910 he was ordained a Catholic priest. In 1916, however, he left the Cistercian order and converted to the Reformed faith. In 1917 he received a Master's degree from the Theological Faculty at the University of Debrecen. After the Civic Democratic Revolution in 1918 he became the under-secretary of state at the Ministry of Religion and Education. During the short-lived Communist dictatorship of the "Hungarian Soviet Republic" in 1919, he taught at the cadre training school of the People's Commissariat for Education. Due to this role, he was dismissed as a teacher after the collapse of the Communist state. In 1925 he left the country for good, after being sentenced to prison for ideological reasons. He fled to Vienna, and in 1928 to Canada, where he served as a Presbyterian minister. In 1938 he started an anti-fascist journal in Hungarian, called *Tárogató* (the name of a Hungarian double-reed musical instrument). In 1950 he reverted to the Catholic faith, and taught as an art history professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax from 1950 to 1967. His early erudite work on the psychology of religion, *A vallás lélektana*, published in 1915, laid the foundation for the modern Hungarian psychology of religion, but it was his condemnation by the Cistercian order for publishing this book which subsequently led him to leave the order. Czakó argues that the psychology of religion deals with manifestations of the religious mind or consciousness and, hence, forms a differentiated form of psychology, with which it also shares a common methodology. There are, however, some who argue against psychology of religion being a science proper, due to the ambiguity of its goals and methods. This problem is also apparent in the number and diversity of ways in which various scholars define psychology of religion. However, if we accept Czakó's suggestion that psychology of religion is merely one differentiated mode of psychology, this problem seems to be resolved.

Czakó also studied the coherence between psychology of religion and philosophy of religion. In his view, psychology is the foundation of philosophy, though not part of it. And yet, it is the philosophy present in psychology that makes the latter a scientific discipline, even if empirical psychology can also legitimately be seen as a totally autonomous discipline. At the same time, philosophy of religion is intimately connected to psychology of religion, because the former is the basis of the latter. In the psychology of religion, philosophy is applied to religion as a whole, in general terms.

Czakó argues that the conclusions of psychology of religion are existentialist, and therefore establish causal relations, whereas philosophy of religion is an evaluative discipline with a theological perspective as its guiding principle. Hence, when attempting to disclose the essence of religion, psychology of religion is positioned within the framework of philosophy of religion. For Czakó, it is important to establish the proximity between psychology of religion and

history of religion, since, he claims, mentality needs to be observed within a historical context. Psychology of religion has therefore been heavily impacted upon by the historical-religious and socio-religious surveys of 'primitive' nations, because these surveys reveal religion as not being equivalent with fetishism and mythology.

Czakó believed that the first manifestations of religion were the same as the essence of the contemporary religions, that is as the essence of Christianity, and he argues that we have to learn the religion of the past through the religiosity of present nations and nationalities. The quest to interpret natural phenomena, coupled with man's search for answers that would explain the course of the world's events, played a principal role in the development of religion. Czakó emphasizes that all nations, even if isolated from each other, have developed some kind of religiosity, which in many cases evolved into monotheism. Following William James, Czakó also maintains that the majority of psychological problems can be related to religion and religious questions. Since psychology of religion analyses the importance of religion for a given individual, it is also connected to pedagogy and is, thus, the foundation of modern pastoral counselling.

## 8 The National Period

Antal Schütz SP (1880–1953) was one of the most eminent Hungarian Catholic theologians in the first half or the twentieth century. He studied theology in Budapest, and earned his doctorate in dogmatics in 1907. In 1917 he received a second doctorate in Würzburg, in psychology. He was Professor of Dogmatics at the Pázmány Péter University from 1916 to 1944, and President of the Szent István Társulat [St. Stephen Association, the oldest publisher and ecclesiastical association in Hungary] from 1930 to 1947. In 1925 the Hungarian Academy of Sciences elected him a corresponding member, and in 1938 a full member of the Academy. His outstanding diligence and working capacity manifested itself in his tendency to write a seminal monograph whenever he took up a new position of employment.

His two most significant works are the *Dogmatika a katolikus hitigazságok rendszere I–II* [*Dogmatics: The System of Catholic Articles of Faith*, vol. 1–2] first published in 1923, with a significantly revised edition in 1937, and the *Oltárszentség a hit és ész világánál* [*The Sacrament in the Light of Faith and Reason*] (1938). His most important philosophical work is *A bölcselet elemei Szent Tamás alapján* [*Elements of philosophy according to Saint Thomas*] published in 1927 (revised edition, 1940). In addition to these specialist works, he

frequently lectured to a wider public. These lectures were later published in collections—*Az Ige szolgálatában* [*In the Service of the Word*] (1928), and the best known *Órség* [*The Watch*] (1936)—and it was for these that Schütz gained the most recognition and acclaim.

As the head of Dogmatics at the Pázmány Péter University, Schütz succeeded two important professors. One of them was Ottokár Prohászka, who was at Pázmány for only two years before being enthroned as bishop in Székesfehérvár. Schütz had a great admiration for Prohászka as a scholar, but even more so for Prohászka the apostle and the mystic. It was Schütz who edited and published Prohászka's oeuvre, comprising almost thirty volumes. Schütz's immediate predecessor, on the other hand, was János Dudek, for whom Schütz had no academic respect at all, and therefore, when he became head of department, he considered starting everything anew.

In order to envisage the relations of theology and the study of religion from Schütz's point of view, a few other authors contemporary with Schütz need to be mentioned.

The theologians whose work impacted on Schütz included Michael Schmaus (1897–1993), a Catholic dogmatic theologian from Munich;<sup>27</sup> and Friederich Gogarten (1887–1967), a Lutheran systematic theologian.<sup>28</sup> His *Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem* [*The Theological Problem of Secularization*] (1953) draws a crucial distinction between secularization and secularism: he argues that secularization is, in a sense, a logical consequence of Christianity, which up to that point had been seen by theologians and the Churches alike as the most severe challenge against the modern world.

The scholars in Religious Studies who influenced Schütz included Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967),<sup>29</sup> the Swedish scholar Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931), who traced the presence of the Christian God in every significant religious

27 Schmaus' most notable work is a compendium of dogmatic theology entitled *Katholische Dogmatik*, in 4 volumes (1938–1941). Schmaus' work was translated into English and published in a series of six self-contained but integrated volumes: *Dogma 1: God in Revelation* (Kansas City, 1968); *Dogma 2: God and Creation* (1969); *Dogma 3: God and His Christ* (1971); *Dogma 4: The Church* (1972); *Dogma 5: The Church as Sacrament* (1975); and *Dogma 6: Justification and the Last Things* (1977).

28 Friederich Gogarten (1887–1967), a Lutheran theologian of systematic theology and author of *Weltanschauung und Glaube* and *Der Zerfall des Humanismus und die Gottesfrage*, both published in 1937. His most notable work, however, is the *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*.

29 Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967): *Das Gebet* (1927); *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion* (1961).



tradition;<sup>30</sup> Rudolf Otto (1869–1937);<sup>31</sup> Erich Przywara SJ (1889–1972), the philosopher of ‘*analogia entis*’ [*the analogy of being*];<sup>32</sup> Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950), scholar in the phenomenology of religion; and two significant sociologists of religion, Georges Dumézil (1898–1986) and Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957), whose *Les rites de passage* [*Rites of passage*] was published in 1909;<sup>33</sup> and last but not least, Bronisław Kasper Malinowski (1884–1942), the Polish-born British anthropologist.

This short list of prominent Religious Studies scholars is important in interpreting Schütz’s idea of religion for two reasons: Firstly, these authors were without exception deeply devout believers, some of them either Catholic or Lutheran priests (Söderblom was a bishop). In their perspective, religion—any religion—follows more or less closely the pattern of the Christian understanding of religion: a connection with the sacred, the holy, the *numinosum*, or whatever they termed the transcendent. Moreover, this connection is personal; hence these scholars were of the opinion that one cannot study religion without being “touched in some way by the holy”. At the same time, they were committed to the methodology of Religious Studies, i.e. in describing different religions they strove to discover the religion’s own system by construing a “meta-religion” based on a phenomenological approach. The construction of a “meta-religion”, in turn, provided them with basic ideas for analyzing religious traditions. All of the authors listed, with two exceptions, approached non-Christian religions from a Christian theological perspective, most of them wrote important theological works, and Heiler and Söderblom, who were mutual friends and an academic inspiration to each other, were also the pioneers of the Christian ecumenical movement. In this period Van Gennep and Malinowski are the ones who represent the new school of Religious Studies employing sociological methodology and theory and replacing philosophical and theological erudition with that of sociology and anthropology.

30 Söderblom’s major work, *The Living God, Basal Forms of Personal Religion*, comprising his Gifford Lectures delivered in 1931 were published by Oxford University Press in 1933 and in 1942 by Heiler in German as *Der lebendige Gott im Zeugnis der Religionsgeschichte. Nachgelassene Gifford-Vorlesungen*.

31 Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), is known in Hungary primarily through his work *Das Heilige. Aufsätze, das Numinose betreffend* (1923), although his *Westöstliche Mystik* (1926) bears just as much the stamp of his thought.

32 Erich Przywara SJ (1889–1972): *Ringel der Gegenwart*, in 2 volumes (1929).

33 Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957): *Les rites de passage* (1909).



Schütz's study "A vallás [Religion]" (1938)<sup>34</sup> is divided into four sections: 1) the external religious scene today; 2) the religious perspective today; 3) religion and culture yesterday and today; and 4) the movements and tasks of religious life today. Schütz describes the specifics of the Religious Studies approach in the following way:

"The study of religion [as opposed to theology] stands in principle on an unrestricted ground. It is equally interested in all religions and in all religious phenomena, it respects all religions equally, and it is opposed to proving or even questioning the truth or falsity of any one religion in comparison with any other religion".<sup>35</sup> Schütz cites Max Müller, and with reference to the development of the discipline, continues: "It is allied with and increasingly relies on both ethnology and psychology, and is trained by the highly successful historical methodology whose creation and success is linked with the names of Ranke and Mommsen."

Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) was a history professor at the Humboldt University in Berlin and the founder of the historiographical approach called historicism, a data-centred approach favouring critical sources over philosophical speculations. Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903) was one of the most prominent German historians of Antiquity, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1902 for his work on Roman law (*Römische Geschichte*). From a historiographical point of view, Schütz was fully aware that from the mid-nineteenth to the turn of the twentieth century, and with some authors even beyond, the study of religion was imbued with evolutionism, namely, with the thesis that religion developed from a pre-religious formation (e.g. Tylor's animism) and was therefore initially the creation of lower needs and experiences (cf. Freud's theories of neurosis). Schütz therefore appeals to the corrective theories of van der Leeuw, Lévy-Bruhl and Bachofen, which "reveal and present primitive religions in their true value". Noting the significance of ethnology, Schütz also cites Wilhelm Schmidt's theory of culture circles (*Kulturkreis*) from his *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (1912–1955).

To this demanding focus on research, Schütz added another requirement traceable throughout his study and demonstrating the progressiveness of his approach, anticipating many of his contemporaries even in international terms. Religion is of a "global" nature, he writes: therefore one must apply "a methodological requirement dictated by catholicity, by which I mean serious universality." Today, if we want to draw a faithful picture of religion around the

34 Antal Schütz "A vallás," in *A mai világ képe—szellemi élet* (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1938), 175–218.

35 Ibid., 206.

world, we are precisely in need of such a requirement, because religion today is a universal phenomenon, although when examining it what we first perceive is its diversity. But let us quote on globalization from Schütz directly, to illustrate his particular style:

“The features of present-day man are discernible in the fact that our historical present encompasses the whole World. Ever since the process which we call history began its impact on this planet, only in the span of the last two generations have its happenings affected our entire world, and have its subjects included the whole of humanity. Today there are no ‘isolated’ phenomena in the grand issues motivating humanity; the territorial human viewpoint has been replaced by the planetary”.<sup>36</sup>

The global nature of history entails a high degree of mutual interaction not just between cultures, but also between religions, which leads to *endosmosis*, the “filtering and seeping” of different religions into each other, syncretism. The planetary setting for this appears for Schütz to stem from Christianity, to which he returns in more detail in the sections on mission and interreligious dialogue; however, we will not elaborate on that here. In Schütz’ view, Christianity has now, for the first time since the integration of the mystery-religions, come into a position of power in interaction with the other religions, and the religions of the world have now for the first time been “directly addressed by Jesus Christ and his gospel.” There are no Christian territories in the world today that could not come in touch with Hindu theosophy, with yoga asceticism, Buddhist quietism, etc. This integration of the global aspect into the study of religion is what earns Schütz prominence among contemporary scholars of Religious Studies and theology.

Schütz also highlighted another feature of the contemporary situation when he pointed to another modern aspect that would not become more widely significant in the study of religions, particularly in the sociology of religion, until the end of the 1960s (P.L. Berger, *Zwang zur Häresie*, 1979): namely, the setting of personal *religious choice*, the market of religion (H. Zinser, *Markt der Religionen*, 1997).

“Thus, the most intimate spirituality and the most private issue of conscience, namely, a decisive religious commitment, is swept into the hassle of the world market’s supply, and almost any religiously concerned person will find themselves in the position of a tribal chief upon whose decision the alliance of his tribe to Christianity or Islam depends.”<sup>37</sup>

36 Ibid., 184.

37 Ibid., 185.

The third feature of the current religious scene is for Schütz its *present-worldliness* as opposed to other-worldliness. Present-worldliness does not focus on other-worldly salvation as in the Middle Ages; rather, it focuses on salvation here and now, primarily in terms of economic welfare and the technology serving such ends, and it “omits no effort in order to make heaven out of this world”.<sup>38</sup> In this age, the religious perspective becomes one among and beside many, and recedes into the “utmost private parts [of a person], into the world of the individual’s conscience, where the individual soul directly seeks and worships and serves its God”.<sup>39</sup> However, in an age of cultural demand and supply, religion finds itself in a competitive position, continually forced to justify its legitimacy in terms of the principle of expedience that is so alien to its very nature. The question is no longer whether a religion is true or not, but “which one provides greater and more effective action.” And it is this course that leads directly to religious surrogates and semi-religions which promise, at least in the short run, to satisfy their followers’ deeply-etched human need for religion.

On the basis of these three features, Schütz’s understanding of religion might be characterized as matching the ranks of his international contemporaries among theologians. As a Catholic theologian and priest, Schütz upheld the Catholic *proprium*, while applying the objective approach of Religious Studies when he wrote about the idea of religion, about religions, and religious phenomena. Hence, we might suggest that in Schütz’s work the study of religion is in the shadow of theology.

Zsigmond Varga (1886–1956) was a Reformed theologian and historian of religion. Varga studied Reformed theology and philosophy in Kolozsvár (present-day Cluj in Romania), and after graduating in 1908, he studied at a number of western universities. In Berlin he was influenced by the Assyriological lectures of Friedrich Delitzsch. Other world-known lecturers he was indebted to included Adolf von Harnack and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

He continued his theological studies, and attended linguistic lectures at the universities of Ghent, Utrecht, London, Oxford and Paris. After his return to Hungary, he received a doctorate in Oriental Languages at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University in 1911. The same year he also received his habilitation in theology in Cluj, and was ordained.

In 1921 he was appointed Professor of History of Religion and Related Disciplines at the Theological Faculty of the Tisza István University in Debrecen. For fifteen years from 1929, he taught Sumerology and Assyriology, and was appointed four times Dean of the Faculty and once the Rector of the

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 187.

University. Observing that there were no academic works in Hungary dedicated to the history of religions as distinct from biblical history, and recognizing a need for a work that would not simply discuss different forms of religion, but also attempt to answer questions related to its essence, in 1932 he published a two-volume monograph on the general history of religion. His aim was to present the history of religion objectively and with scientific thoroughness; he saw the goal of history of religion as an attempt to understand religious life in its diversity, in the variety of its manifestations and in the materiality of its occurrences. Against the critics who questioned the erudition and the objectivity of his religio-historical work on the grounds of his Christian commitment, Zsigmond Varga argued for the recognition of critical affinity and sensibility even among theologians, whose interest cannot, he argued, lie in the apologetics of Christianity, this being independent of human arbitration.

Instead, he addressed the legitimacy of including history of religion within a theological faculty curriculum, and examined the relation of history of religion to other theological disciplines. Varga opposed Adolf von Harnack's stance, who considered teaching religion of history at a theological faculty superfluous, whereas Varga considered that the knowledge provided by such studies would contribute to a better understanding of Christianity and, therefore, was indispensable in the education of the clergy. He drew a clear distinction between history of religion and other disciplines such as phenomenology of religion, philosophy of religion, or psychology of religion, since these sciences create types of the occurrences they study, and measure religious development according to these types, whereas history of religion studies the historical past of religions in the multiplicity of their religious occurrences.<sup>40</sup>

Of the essence of religion, he wrote: "Religion is the sensation and the expression of the relation between that which falls out of and/or beyond human experience, the extrasensory."<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to define the essence of religion because of the great differences between religions, and yet religion is a universal phenomenon, for all ages and nations have their own religions. There is, he argued, no irreligious man or nation; it is by necessity that man enters into a relation with the extrasensory. The reason why we cannot talk about God in all of religious occurrences, Varga explains, is that the idea of God is a long-term development, and also because there are religions that have no idea of God, as in Buddhism. Religion can be anything wherein man has a sense of a higher relation. However, if all religions have the same sense of higher relation one might legitimately ask the reason behind the differences of religious

40 Zsigmond Varga, *Általános vallástörténet* (Debrecen: A scherzó, 1932), 12.

41 *Ibid.*, 59.

systems. Varga answered this question from a religious standpoint: "Everything is a separate creation. Every man senses and experiences his connection to the eternal divinity according to his own created being and, hence, manifests it according to his own difference".<sup>42</sup> The role of religion in the cultural history of humankind was also varied. Culture and religion could relate to each other differently. On the one hand, religion can generate culture (having an effect on how people dress and eat or on the established social norms) but, on the other hand, it can also stunt the development of a culture (for example, the shunning of the world in asceticism, which might also foster hostility against culture). Fundamentally, however, religion and culture complement each other, as in the example of Christianity, where the religion serves as the basis of the European culture. It was important for Varga to clarify whether divine revelation can be found in the religions outside the Bible. All religious sentiment, however, can be interpreted as the inspiration of God's Spirit, and individuals discerning God's presence in created things will be lead to search after Him more directly. Hence, Varga claims, "religion is a work of [divine] revelation even in its most primitive stages,"<sup>43</sup> but it is in Christianity that divine revelation comes to completion.

Ferenc Flóris Kúhár (1893–1943), Benedictine monk, historian of religion, completed his theological studies at the University of Innsbruck and was ordained priest in 1916. Receiving a doctorate in philosophy and theology in 1917, he became a professor at Panonhalma, teaching canon law and philosophy from 1922 to 1929. In 1920 he founded the Daughters of St. Benedict monastic order. From 1929 he was a *Privatdozent* in philosophy of religion at the Theological Faculty of the University of Budapest. Between 1929 and 1931 he was a Professor in Rome, teaching doctrinal theology and sacramental theology at the Collegio Sant'Anselmo. From 1935 to his death, Kúhár was Benedictine prior in Budapest, and a Professor at the Theological Faculty in Budapest. He was mainly interested in psychology and history of religion, publishing studies on these topics—for example *Bevezetés a vallás lélektanába* [*Introduction to the psychology of religion*] (1926), where he focuses on prayer, analyzes religious experience, and examines the conceptual framework of the psychology of religion, defining it in terms of its subject matter, significance, history, sources and methodology.

His *Egyetemes vallástörténet* [*Universal History of Religion*] published in two volumes in 1936 aims at a comparative analytical presentation of all religions

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 84.

as reflected in their mutual influence on each other.<sup>44</sup> Besides being a scientific interpretation of religion as a phenomenological entity, history of religion is also a representation of individual religion's "vital processes". Kùhár argues that religion is a total phenomenon in terms of experience, because it has an existentially defining influence on man. Its universality is related to the same nature manifested in time and space. Religion can also be described as an event, for it is a history, its formal subject being that of religious events: "History of religion is in reality history of the soul".<sup>45</sup> Outlining the development of history of religion, Kùhár at first discusses religious sources, mentions the history of the Greco-Roman religion, and compares it to the Christian religion-historical view. Following an overview of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, the work focuses on the mainstream and the methodology of contemporary history of religions and pays tribute to scholars influencing Kùhár's own theory: Lafiteau (cultural evolution), de Brosses, Comte (law of three stages), Lubbock (fetishism), and Tylor (animism). Kùhár notes the impact of different philosophical and theological schools, evolution theory, and returns to his favourite topic, cultural history. Employing the methodology of cultural history, he places the cultures of the so-called primitive peoples within the history of mankind, for his method does not recognize the existence of peoples without culture or history. This *Kulturkreis* methodology was developed by Graebner, who emphasized through the analysis of gathered ethnological material that the elements thereof can be best explained in relation to each other and not taken out of their context, thus precluding the one-sidedness of the religious evolution theory. Kùhár then turns to Schmidt's theory, agreeing with his claim that all religious development stems from a primitive monotheism (*Urmonotheismus*).

Kùhár wrote his history of religion by summarizing the scientific findings of his contemporaries. Creating no original claim, he necessarily relied on the results of others. In ordering and analyzing his material, he used the methodology of cultural history, the respected modern tool of his day, while the challenge posed by the primitive monotheism theory against the popular notion of religious evolution formed the basis of his scientific approach. The Christian ethical dimension of his evaluation of religions is clearly evident. He perceives and values the religions presented in his work through the optical lenses of Christianity, and this became the target of criticism directed against

44 For more on this topic see Csaba Máté Sarnyai, "Vallástörténet, keresztény etikai dimenzióban: Kùhár Flóris: Egyetemes vallástörténet." in *Örökség és küldetés Bencések Magyarországon* (Budapest: Piliscsaba, in press).

45 Ferenc Flóris Kùhár, *Egyetemes vallástörténet I* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1936), 14.



both Kúhár and his mentor Schmidt's theory of primitive monotheism. Kúhár similarly traces and finds the features of Christian monotheism retrospectively in the vast, colourful and varied history of religion, tracing them back to their supposed ultimate beginnings. His thinking was clearly not without presuppositions, as he believed monotheism to be the genuine ultimate form of religion; and as a Christian theologian, he attempted to show the developmental history of religions as he saw it (not, however, on the basis of the religious evolution theory) to the heights of developed monotheism, i.e. Christianity.

Géza Róheim (1891–1953), the author of numerous books and articles on folk and spiritual beliefs, shamanism, Australian totemism and the mythology of indigenous peoples, was a significant figure in psychoanalytical cultural theory and in folkloristics. In 1911 and 1912 he studied geography at the University of Budapest. In Berlin and Leipzig he studied ethnology, and became acquainted with Freud's psychoanalytical views and methodology, which he subsequently applied in his own work, pioneering psychoanalytical anthropology. He earned his doctorate in 1914 and received the so called Freud prize in 1921.<sup>46</sup> He spent several years among aboriginal peoples, studying their languages, customs and systems of religion. In 1928–31 he went on a research expedition to French Somaliland (the erstwhile French colony in the Horn of Africa), Australia, and Melanesia, and visited Arizona collecting ethnographic material among the Juma Indians. In all his anthropological work, he strove to reveal the historical layers of the folk culture, and interpreted authentic ethnographic materials with a psychoanalytical approach. Because of growing anti-Semitism, he was forced to leave Hungary in 1938, and settled in New York City. He became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society, of the American Anthropological Association, of the American Folklore Society and of the New York Psychoanalytical Society. Among his most important works are: *A varázserő fogalmának eredete* [*The Origin of the Concept of Magic Power*] (Budapest, 1914), *Australian totemism* (London, 1925), *A csurunga népe* [*The People of the Tjurunga*] (Budapest, 1932), *The Eternal Ones of the Dream* (New York, 1945), and *Hungarian and Vogul Mythology* (New York, 1954).

For Róheim, religious concepts comprised the sum total of projected ideas.<sup>47</sup> He maintains that every social phenomenon, religion included, has two sides: on the one hand, the object of the cult, that is, its content, and on the other

46 Johannes Reichmayr, *Einführung in die Ethnopschoanalyse. Geschichte, Theorien und Methoden*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995), 223.

47 For more see Csaba Máté Sarnyai: "Julius Krohn—Róheim Géza és Mircea Eliade sámánképe." *Korunk Kolozsvár* 2007 (július): 84–7. See also Géza Róheim's *A varázserő fogalmának eredete* (Budapest: Posner Károly és fia, 1914) and his *Magyar néphit és népszokások* (Budapest: Atheneum, 1925).



hand, the mode of the cult, that is, its function. Róheim argues that religion contains an objective part—nature (nature being the determining factor of deities)—and a subjective part, i.e. magic, which consists of emotions linking humans to nature. These emotions stem from “faulty reactions” to phenomena experienced in nature, while their continuance is perpetuated by society. Róheim is also perplexed by a question posed by some of his contemporaries: how does one explain the similarity of specific cultural occurrences (religious or other) between distant nations? He denies the possibility of transition offered by the cultural historical answer (Grabner, Schmidt), since he also denies the spiritual unity of mankind. Róheim therefore posits that the similarity of basic occurrences in unrelated cultures ensues from human psychology and physiology. His answer to the question is the convergence theory, which denies the possibility of uncovering all historical relations between occurrences, since identical effects do not necessarily stem from the same causes. Therefore, they should be examined from a psychological point of view, similarly to the recurrent common human forms of association of ideas. Róheim believes that the question of correlation can be best answered by statistical method. In other words, if two customs appear related to each other on more occasions than a simple calculus of probabilities would warrant, than there is an “adhesion” between the two. This method, however, is not flawless: for if, for historical reasons, an idea spreads more widely than a custom does, the correlation value of the affinity will be smaller. Hence, Róheim advocates a distinction between an external transition (superficial, affecting only the material culture) and an internal transition (significantly affecting the structure of the adopting nation).

Károly Marót (1885–1963) was a classical philologist, historian of religion, ethnologist, Professor at the University in Cluj from 1917, and later a private tutor at the Classical Philology Department of the Ferenc József University in Szeged. From 1947 to his death he taught at the University in Budapest. He was a versatile scholar, who made significant contributions to a number of disciplines. In 1956 he was elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; the title of his inaugural lecture was “Greek Poetry and Homer”. Marót was first and foremost a classical philologist, for it was through the study of the ancient Greek literature and Homeric epics that he became interested in the history of religion and ethnology, initially addressing theoretical issues of folk-poetry, but subsequently, inspired by contemporary theories, also turning his attention to rituals and the relationship between magic and religion.<sup>48</sup>

48 For more see in Csaba Máté Sarnyai: “Vallás, mágia és áldozat Marót Károly és Domján Elek nézeteinek tükrében,” in *A magyar vallástudomány története*, Mihály Hoppál and Ábrahám Kovács ed. (Budapest: L’armattan, 2009), 181–7.

Marót is considered to be one of the most significant Hungarian representatives of the 'Myth and Ritual' school, although he did not count himself among their number. The proponents of this school were searching for the correlation between religion and myth, and from rites they derived community building forms such as children's plays, drama and folk-poetry. The most significant representatives of the Ritual school included James Frazer and William Robertson Smith. However, unlike these scholars Marót thought the initial state of rite formation to be a sublogical process, while the explanation of the ritual is a rationalization.<sup>49</sup> Hence, he prioritized ritual over myth as the precondition for symbol formation. Marót saw the initial ritual not as a survival, but in a constructive way as a revival or re-creation, no matter how old its genesis. With this theory, Marót reconceptualized Tylor's concept of survival, and explained the realization and the renaissance of ritual from a psychological perspective.

Many of Marót's contemporaries, even among the Ritual school, contrasted religious rituals with magic rituals. When discussing the origin of religion, Frazer actually claims that there was no religion at the beginning, only magic. However, since magic proved insufficient, they developed gods—after their own likeness—and with them, religion. While religion is intrinsically related to emotions of dependence upon deities and therefore to emotions of devotion and conciliation, magic is related to attitudes of subjugation and control. In other words, magic entails the belief that a suitable individual can influence higher power. Marót keeps the crucial replacement concept from Schmidt's and Frazer's theories, but changes the sequence of their elements, since according to his theory religion in time always transforms into magic. However, he was also criticized for these views. In an article from 1934,<sup>50</sup> he came to the conclusion that one cannot separate religion and magic, and put them into developmental sequence. His major premise is that in the religion of aboriginal peoples, magic and religion are simultaneously present and intertwined, as opposed to the theories in which these appear in succession. Hence, he provides a twofold criticism of Frazer and his colleagues. Firstly, neither magic nor religion is characterized by pure, determined exclusiveness, and secondly, magic features are associated with all religious phenomena. Marót sees as such magical features, for example, prayers, or ritual behaviours preceding the communion rite such as fasting or pilgrimage. Some elements of magic can have, at the same time, religious significance—he considers peace offerings, or

49 Károly Marót, *Mágia a modern elmélet tükrében* (Budapest, 1930); "Vallás és mágia." *Ethnographia* 44 (1933): 31–44; *Fejezetek a magyar néprajz módszertanához* (Budapest: Kertész József, 1940).

50 Károly Marót: "A vallás és mágia viszonyáról," *Ethnographia* 45, 1–2 (1934): 81–3.

atonements to be such. All in all, Marót attempted to prove the overlapping of magic and religion by highlighting the very neuralgic points on which theories separating and subsequently ordering magic and religion based their premises; he believed that theories separating religion and magic are in fact doomed to failure, since these two are implicitly related. Consequently, he sees no sense in linking the atoning, *do ut des* category of sacrifices exclusively to religion, nor to magic either.

Károly (Karl) Kerényi was one of the leading figures among a great generation of Hungarian classical philologists and historians of antiquity, who wrote his most significant works on Graeco-Roman histories of religion. Born in Timișoara (Temesvár in Hungarian) on 19 January 1897, he studied at the Pázmány Péter University in Budapest, where he received his doctorate and in 1926 became a *Privatdozent* at the University. From 1934 he taught classical philology and history of antiquity at the Hungarian Queen Erzsébet University in Pécs. From 1940 to 1943 he was the head of the Classical Philology Department at the Royal Hungarian Horthy Miklós University in Szeged, but was forced into emigration and settled in Switzerland. From 1943, he taught for three years at the University of Basel and was the research director of the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich. He was a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, of the Instituto di Studi Etruschi in Firenze, and of the Forschungsinstitut für Kulturmorphologie in Frankfurt. He died on April 10, 1973 in Zurich and was buried in Ascona.

His major works were in the field of Greek mythology. *The Mythology of the Greeks* (*Die Mythologie der Griechen*) is the best known, written originally in German and published in several translations. In Kerényi's time German was the professional language for many of the humanities, including ancient history. Kerényi maintained an active correspondence with Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse. The centenary of his birth was marked by a memorial conference honouring his professional achievements.<sup>51</sup> The title of the conference proceedings—'Mythology and Humanity'<sup>52</sup>—references Kerényi's close association with the history of religion, which scholars focusing on Kerényi's work attribute to the influence of C.G. Jung. Kerényi presented and analyzed the myths and heroes of antiquity with a distinctive anthropological sensitivity. Some scholars have also found links with Gadamer's thinking in his work. When comparing the world of Antiquity and Christianity, Kerényi sees the crucial

51 János György Szilágyi, *Mitológia és humanitás. Kerényi Károly 100. születésnapjára* (Budapest: Osiris, 1999).

52 Cf. Anikó Bircsák, "Az ünnep ideje. Kerényi Károly és Gadamer," *Irodalomtudományi közlemények* 110: 3–4 (2006): 357–65.

difference between the two in the direction of their festivities: Christian feasts are directed towards a supernatural power, while the ancient feasts were directed at Nature itself.<sup>53</sup> This anthropological point of view was critically opposed, however, by Kerényi's sole internationally known disciple Angelo Brelich, who was referred to among his Italian colleagues as "Kerenyist" or as inflected with "Kerenyism", a reputation he strove to replace by his own reputation.<sup>54</sup>

Another fundamental feature of Kerényi's Religious Studies was seeing in religion a basic and determining force of culture formation, a feature he considered valid not merely for the era of his expertise, but generally applicable to all cultural periods. In terms of the direction of Hungarian history of antiquity and Religious Studies, Kerényi is credited with an important initiative: instead of studies driven by the belief in Hungarian cultural superiority generated in response to the Trianon tragedy, Kerényi preferred the broader European and pan-human (as opposed to nationalist) approaches. He strongly opposed the tendency that exhausted the Hungarian scholarly endeavour in ransacking Greek and Latin language sources merely to find references that might be somehow linked to Hungarian history and identity. Kerényi "repudiated the confrontation of the national with the universal 'Hungarian-targeted', for he was of the belief that only works 'serving the broader audience of humanity' can win respect for Hungarian scholarship. He was convinced that in opposition to European tradition, or without regard for it, there can be no significant Hungarian cultural achievement."<sup>55</sup>

Károly Kerényi is beyond question one of the most significant figures in the study of ancient religion and, in the company of M. Heidegger, R. Bultmann, H.G. Gadamer, E. Levinas, P. Ricoeur, J. Piaget, and M. Eliade, one of the most fascinating characters of the Central-European intelligentsia we have encountered in the course of this century.<sup>56</sup>

53 *Az ünnep lényege* =Károly Kerényi, "Halhatatlanság és Apollón-vallás" in *Ókortudományi tanulmányok 1918–1943*, ed. Géza Komoróczy and János György Szilágyi (Budapest: Magvető, 1984), 333.

54 Cf. Natale Spineto's analysis of the relationship between the two authors: "Károly Kerényi e gli studi storico-religiosi in Italia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 24 (2000): 385–411.

55 János György Szilágyi: "Egy elmaradt emlékkönyv helyett. Tisztelegés Kerényi Károly előtt" *Európai utas* 35 (1999) <<http://www.hhrf.org/europaiutas/19992/index.htm>>.

56 Ricardo Dottori in Kerényi 100.

## 9 The Atheistic Period

Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel (1908–1970) classical philologist, literary historian, and historian of religion, received his Hungarian-Latin-Greek teacher's diploma from the Pázmány Péter University in Budapest in 1932, later earning his doctorate there as well. He was a student of János Horváth, Károly Kerényi, and Gyula Hornyánszky at the university. He was a member of the Stemma Circle, a group of young writers and historians of antiquity gathering around Károly Kerényi. From 1938 to 1946 he was the copy editor/literary adviser of the *Új Idők Irodalmi Rt.* [The Modern Era Literary Co.], and a contributor to the *Új Idők Lexikona* [*Lexicon of the Modern Era*]. Between 1946 and 1948, he was a co-worker at the Budapest Cultural Centre, and a columnist at the journal *Új Szó* [*New Word*]. Trencsényi-Waldapfel's academic career began in 1948, when he was offered the position of head of the Classical Philology Department at the University of Szeged, which he held for two years, while also serving as the Rector of the University in 1949. Around the same time he was appointed a full university professor, and at first a corresponding member but soon after a regular member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. From 1950 until his death, Trencsényi-Waldapfel was one of the leading lecturers at the Latin-Greek Institute of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, and from 1950 to 1953 he served as the Rector there. He was also a member and for a time President of the Hungarian Society for the Study of Antiquity.

Most of his works deal with Graeco-Roman antiquity and its afterlife. He also studied Latin poetic influence on Hungarian poets. He edited several World Literature Anthologies. He edited and translated most of Cicero's selected works, published in 1955. He drew attention to the antique parallels in nativity narratives, and was the first to write about the antique precursors of minstrelsy in his introduction to an edition of Vergil's eclogues in Hungarian, entitled *Pásztori Magyar Vergilius* [*Hungarian Pastoral Vergil*]. His work on the history of Greek literature (*Görög irodalomtörténet* [1944]) and the ten pamphlets *Klasszikus arcképek* [*Portraits of the Classics*] (1964) played an important role in promoting the writers of classical Humanism. A philosophical approach characterizes his work on Erasmus and his Hungarian friends (*Erasmus és Magyar barátai*, 1941). Two aspects of his personality—the academic lecturer and the author of literary pursuits—are inseparably linked in his oeuvre.

From the point of view of Religious Studies, his most significant work is *Mitológia* [*Mythology*],<sup>57</sup> published in 1956, where he gives an account of the

57 An augmented edition of his previous work titled *Görög-római mitológia* published in 1936.

most significant Greek myths following Kerényi's scientific approach and style. The book was translated into German, Russian, Polish and Czech, which assured Trencsényi-Waldapfel's mention in the reference books of international studies of religion. A collection of his Religious Studies articles, *Vallástörténeti tanulmányok* [*Studies in History of Religion*] (1959, also translated into German) including some previously published in Hungarian journals, is another important work. Trencsényi-Waldapfel's Hungarian translations of antique sources relevant from a Religious Studies standpoint also contributed to the development of the discipline.<sup>58</sup> His literary and historiographical works, and his studies in religion, have yet to be thoroughly studied by Hungarian scholars. The few articles and studies addressing Trencsényi-Waldapfel so far are mostly reviews of his publications, obituaries,<sup>59</sup> and some rare scattered references to his work.

Trencsényi-Waldapfel considered knowledge of ancient religion necessary for the understanding of European history, art and literature, and therefore deemed the uncovering and analysis of its sources a significant task for the history of religion. The fundamental research question of comparative mythology is to reveal the origins for parallels and similarities identified among different nations' mythologies. There are two possibilities for explaining those parallels and similarities: common Indo-European roots (he is referring here to Max Müller's thesis based on the names of deities, though without mentioning Müller by name) or reciprocal impact between the nations in antiquity. However, Trencsényi-Waldapfel believed that the modern approach to interpreting natural and social experiences offered a more promising answer. He saw the Marxist view of religion—particularly that of Marx and Engels—as applicable in comparative mythology, in supporting the idea that people create gods rather than the other way around.

"Myth is the reflection of real life conditions, the human *sine qua non*, and since those conditions develop according to more or less identical rules, their mythological reflection on a given stage of social development will display more or less the same features."<sup>60</sup>

Given this theoretical background, the application of a Marxist approach in evaluating Trencsényi-Waldapfel's Religious Studies works seems legitimate.

58 Hesiod's epics, Menander's *Dyskolos*, Sophocles's *Antigone* and Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*.

59 Ágnes Szalay, "Die literarische Tätigkeit von I. T. W.," *Acta Antiqua* (1968); László Rónay, "Homérosztól Radnótiig," *Jelenkor* 2 (1969); Kálmán Szabó, *T.W.I. Irod. tört.* 4 (1970); Andor Tarnai, *T.W.I. (Irod. tört. Közl.* 3 (1970); János Harmatta, *T.W.I. Magy. Tud.* 11 (1970).

60 Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel, *Mitológia* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1956), ch. 1, sect. 4.



The assumptions predicated by Marxism—especially those pertaining to the contextual interpretation of religious ideas—constitute elements of Religious Studies research largely independent of Marxist ideology as such, and the evaluation of Trencsényi-Waldapfel's work within Religious Studies needs to be based not on his relation to Marxism but on his results. The prevalence of Marxist statements in his work after 1950 reflects the ideological necessities of the time, but on the other hand his work also demonstrates an authentic scholarly attempt at applying a Marxist approach in a productive way. Here is an example of a text written as a political requirement or sop:

“In the overall confusion of different scientific and pseudo-scientific schools, one can find his way within every science (hence, within the realm of mythology too) only with the sure compass of dialectical and historical materialism.”<sup>61</sup>

By contrast, his social-class interpretation of the Prometheus myth is an example of a genuine Marxist insight:

“The working people are the new Prometheus. The working people are those who with their labour serve the advance of mankind; however, the exploiting classes have bound the working people within social stratification and doomed them to hardly-bearable tortures recurring with every new generation.”<sup>62</sup>

The oeuvre of this significant figure in Hungarian studies of religion is still a valuable source for the study of Greek mythology. Although Trencsényi-Waldapfel's works published during the Communist era bear the stamp of forced ideology, this cannot hinder an unbiased evaluation of the author's work. This call for an unbiased approach is even more urgent following twenty years of uncensored scholarship, which should support the consolidation of an autonomous approach to the history of science, namely, the recognition that Marxist theoretical assumptions cannot be identified with the ideological constraints within which the works of that period were born.<sup>63</sup>

István Hahn (1913–1984), Jewish rabbi, historian of antiquity and religion, studied at the Pázmány Péter University, where he received his Greek-Latin teacher's and philologist's diploma in 1935, and in 1953 a Russian major diploma (from the same University, by then renamed Eötvös Loránd University). He received his rabbinical training at the Jewish Theological Institute. After teaching for a couple of years in high school, he moved to university teaching in 1952: from 1964 he was a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Graeco-Roman History at Eötvös Loránd University, from 1959 an Associate Professor, and from

61 Ibid., ch. 1.

62 Ibid.

63 Cf. Kurt Rudolph, *Geschichte und Probleme der Religionswissenschaft* (*Studies in the History of Religion* 53) (Leiden u.a.: Brill, 1992), 8.



1963 to his retirement in 1983 the head of the department. He was awarded the Candidate of Historical Sciences degree in 1958,<sup>64</sup> and his full doctorate in 1972. He was appointed a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1979, and a regular member in 1982. Between 1959 and 1962 he also served as Director of the Department of Ancient History at the University of Szeged, in a part-time position. In 1957 he was invited to consider being appointed as Stockholm's Chief Rabbi, but finally chose to remain in Hungary.<sup>65</sup>

His studies encompassed a broad spectrum of Ancient East and Graeco-Roman history and Religious Studies: studies of the royal properties of the Mycenaean and Homeric periods, of the terms of land properties in the Ancient East, of the forms of peasant dependence in late Antiquity, of the supersession of slavery in the wake of ancient town development, and of the military regime of the Second Triumvirate. His source criticism on Appian of Alexandria is also significant. We can distinguish three focal points in his work. The first addresses the ancient history of the Jews, but in a broad geographical and chronological perspective, encompassing topics from ancient Iran to the cohabitation of Jews in the Graeco-Roman world, from the Dead Sea scrolls to the *genizah*. The second focus is on Ancient Greek history and religion, particularly on the Archaic and Classical periods, while the third focuses on the Roman Imperial Period, initially the late Antique period but gradually encompassing also the period of the Principate.<sup>66</sup> His academic profile was renowned for his enormous work capacity and astounding command of languages: according to his students and colleagues Hahn read and wrote in more than twenty languages.<sup>67</sup>

64 An earlier form of postgraduate qualification in Hungary, before the introduction of the PhD degree.

65 György Haraszti, "Trapéz a lejtőn—A magyarországi zsidóság a második világháború után és az '56-os forradalomban," *Confessio* 31: 1 (2007): 66–94.

66 György Németh, "Hahn István és Appianos." *Múlt és Jövő* 4 (2008): 142–46.

67 István Hahn, *A világ teremtés az iszlám legendáiban* (Budapest, 1935); *A zsidó nép története a babiloni fogságtól napjainkig* (1947); *Istennek és népek* (1968; 2nd extended ed. 1980; translated into German as *Götter und Völker* [1977]); see the critical review by Géza Komoróczy: "Történelem és hitvilág," *Antik Tanulmányok* 30 (1983): 132–139; *Róma istenei* (1975); *Hitvilág és történelem: Tanulmányok az ókori vallás köreiből* (1982) are the most significant works from a Religious Studies perspective. Hahn also translated several Russian works on Religious Studies and ancient history into Hungarian, and published significant historical works, high school and university textbooks and reference books. A number of Jewish theological works and books on Jewish cultural history are connected to his name: *A felavatott ifjú könyve* coauthored with Adolf Fisch (1938); *Zsidó ünnepek és népszokások*

His *Istenek és népek* [*Gods and Nations*] is a monograph on the history of religion. Hahn's Religious Studies approach is clear, applying the *etic* concept to acknowledge the individuality of each instantiation rather than imposing a standardized or *emic* model upon them. In the introduction to his work on the Roman deities he writes: "the goal of scientific cognition [related to religion] is not some kind of value judgment, but the sensitive rendering, understanding and conveying of the development and working of each particular system" (*Deities of Rome*, "Introduction"). The *Gods and Nations* volume discusses religions from three perspectives. The first part addresses the various different theories on the origin of religion and mentions the works of all the significant international contemporary authors on the topic. The second part discusses the ancient religions under the heading "Religions of the nations", omitting those that became world religions, for they are discussed in the shortest, third part of the volume. Hahn's characteristic approach to religion is based on the theory of religious evolution, an approach that was already coming under severe criticism in international scholarship by the time the volume's second, extended edition was published (1978); but this scepticism was not shared by Hahn. The second marked feature of his work is the use of key terms and approaches of Marxist social philosophy and historiography, particularly the ideas of social class and class struggle.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, Hahn's work most clearly does not belong among the propaganda materials of Soviet atheism; indeed, in his Introduction Hahn offers a subtle criticism of Engels' views on religion.

Miklós Tomka (1941–2010), economist and sociologist, received his diploma from the Karl Marx University of Economic Sciences (Budapest) in 1964. From 1968 he worked at the Mass Communication Research Centre of the MRT (Hungarian Radio and Television), a predecessor of the Hungarian Public Opinion Research Institute. In 1966 he received his doctorate in sociology and in 1977 his Candidate in Social Sciences degree.

His early works relevant to Religious Studies already demonstrate his interest in the sociological aspect of religion,<sup>69</sup> and Tomka's monographs and

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(1940); *A fény ünnepe: Chanukka* (1941)—see Iván T. Berendt, "Hahn István (1913–1984)," *Magyar Tudomány* 29: 12 (1984), 1019–1020.

68 István Hahn, *Istenek és népek* (Budapest: Minerva Kiadó, 1980), 57 ff.

69 *Mai fiatalok és a vallás vidéken* (Budapest: Ifjúsági Lapkiadó, 1976); *A vallási tudat szerkezete* (Budapest, 1978, printed manuscript); *Vallásosság és szocialista tudat* (Budapest, 1977, printed manuscript). "A hiedelmek a társadalmi tudat kialakulásában és az egyéni tudat szerveződésében" in *Hiedelemrendszer és társadalmi tudat, 1st vol.*, ed. Tibor Frank and Mihály Hoppál (Budapest: Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont, 1980), 97–105. "Vallási hiedelmek és nem vallási hiedelmek" In Frank & Hoppál (1980), 141–158; "Problems in the identity formation of the Catholic Church in Second and Third World Societies,"

edited volumes confirm his academic quality by the standards of international scholarship.<sup>70</sup> Although his primary training was as an economist, the primary focus of his work was the study of religion and religiosity. Already by the 1970s he had started to use a new method for measuring religiosity that avoided the unprofessional ideological dichotomy of the time between “church religiosity” and “convinced atheist” in favour of a much more nuanced, multilevel scale (see the review of this in Imre András’ volume). He made a number of original data collections using this method, enabling a detailed survey of the characteristics and development of Hungarian religiosity.

He is first and foremost credited with the Hungarian and Eastern and Central European demonstration of the religious self-definitions of “*religious bricolage*, *religion à la carte*, *Leutereligion*” (Thomas Luckmann), which he first verified on Hungarian samples, but later developed further using and analyzing international data. Tomka’s academic work on religion and religiosity before 1990, within a social context strongly determined by Marxist ideology, was characterized by an aspiration for professional competence, a preference for the objective data of public opinion polls, and for international scholarship and genuine research questions. In this sense, he was a participant in the refashioning of academic discourse and public consciousness on religion, moving from a one-sided and biased approach towards a more substantial discourse.<sup>71</sup> One important precondition of this fashioning was Tomka’s excellent command of German, English, French and Russian, and his East German connections, which allowed him access to international scholarship. Consequently,

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in *Religion and public domain: acts 17th International Conference for the Sociology of Religion* (Paris: CISR, 1983), 151–176; “Religiöser Wandel in Ungarn,” in *Religion und sozialer Wandel*, Hugo Bogensberger, ed. Thomas M. Gannon, Klaus Zapotoczky (Linz; Passau: Veritas, 1986), 85–118; “Types and dimensions of religiosity—and problems of measurement,” in *Religion and atheism as objects of sociological research*, ed. Marie Suchánková and Stanislav Hubik (Brno: UVSV CSAV, 1987), 49–64.

70 *Vallásszociológia: szöveggyűjtemény* (Budapest: ELTE BTK Tankönyvkiadó, 1984); “A magyarországi katolicizmus statisztikája és szociológiája,” in *Magyar katolikus almanach. 2., A magyar katolikus egyház élete 1945–1985*, ed. László Turányi (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1988), 510–77; *Religion und Kirche in Ungarn: Ergebnisse religionssoziologischer Forschung 1969–1988* (Wien: Ungarisches Kirchensoziologisches Institut, Institut für Kirchliche Sozialforschung, 1990).

71 In similar respect one could mention the philosopher Tamás Nyíri, the journal *Vigilia* and its editor György Rónay, János Pilinszky and several other poets, ethnographers such as Sándor Bálint or Zsuzsanna Erdélyi, and not least the journal *Mérleg* edited by János Boór in Munich, and several other theological journals edited and published by emigrant Hungarians.

and despite the Iron Curtain, his work was presented in a wider academic context than that of his contemporaries.

Tomka's career and scholarly achievement peaked after the political changes of 1990, partly because uncensored scientific research on religion was finally possible, and partly because from the mid-1990s he took part in the most significant European networks and research projects in sociology of religion, first as the expert for the Hungarian region, but gradually also for the entire Central and Eastern European region. Since his most important work—primarily focusing on an analysis of the relationship between the Catholic Church and contemporary society, and on regional issues—was written in this post-atheist, pluralist period, its evaluation goes beyond the historical constraints of our present study.

### 9.1 *Recent Tendencies*

The collapse of the communist system in Hungary around 1990 had no important and direct impact on the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft*. As mentioned above the communist policy regarding higher education and scientific research was quite friendly to religious studies in contrast to its attitude to ecclesial theology. The change therefore happened in the field of theology. Christian churches have got political and financial support for opening new theological colleges and in the first decade after 1990 they attracted a lot of interested applicants. In the public discourse the interest in religious topics increased as well, which showed the overall need of the society regarding knowledge about religion.

In some universities scholars of religion started to offer courses in *Religionswissenschaft* and they got grants from Hungarian foundations and from the higher education support program of the Soros Foundations, the so called HESP, to support these activities. The experiences with the students' growing interest led some scholars at the University of Szeged to regularly begin teaching program in *Religionswissenschaft*. After the successful accreditation process in 1999, the first year of the academic program started, and in 2000 the University established the department for Study of Religions. Both the academic program and the department for the Study of Religions were the first ones in the Hungarian history of tertiary education and the department is still the only one in the country. Soon other universities such as the Catholic College of Zsámbék (no more existing), King Sigismund College, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest and lastly the University of Debrecen started opened academic programs. The Péter Pázmány Catholic University provides MA program in History of Religion. Because of general reforms and the restructuring of higher

education to accommodate the Bologna system, permanently successful academic programs can be provided only at large universities. Actually about 200 university degrees are given in religious studies by all programs together.

There are two international exchange networks in Hungary for religious studies (CEEPUS and ERASMUS), both coordinated by the University of Szeged (Tibor Porció is the contact person). Both networks have been active for more than 15 years and have around 10 partner departments in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in other European countries including UK.

The scholarly research in religious studies is covered by more scientific networks in Hungary, such as MVT (Magyar Vallástudományi Társaság; The Hungarian Association for the Academic Study of Religions) with focus on ethnography, MSZT (Hungarian Sociological Association), Kisegyházkutató (Research Center for Small Churches), Wesley Research Center for the Sociology of Church and Religion - all three sociologically oriented and religiously independent networks. Founded by Miklós Tomka, the internationally renowned scholar, the Catholic research institute for sociology of religion of the Hungarian Pastoral Institute has existed for some 20 years.

As regards current periodicals—*Vallástudományi tanulmányok* (Papers in Religious Studies) is the journal of the MVT issued since the turn of the millennium. Its current editors-in-chief are Mihály Hoppál and Ábrahám Kovács. It mostly publishes papers presented at academic sessions of the Hungarian Society of Religious Studies. Since 2003, it has also re-published, as part of its reprint series, longer treatises published long before and difficult to find yet important for the discipline. Therefore, the publication is a combination of a periodical and book series. Among the volumes published in the later series, two discuss primarily the history of the Hungarian religious studies: Mihály Hoppál's *Tanulmányok Diószegi Vilmosról* [Papers about Vilmos Diószegi] and *A magyar ősvalláskutatás kérdései* [Issues in the Hungarian ancient religion research] by Vilmos Voigt.

The electronic journal of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Szeged, *Liminalitás* (editor-in-chief: András Máté-Tóth) has also been issued since the turn of the millennium. Its primary focus is on current theories in religious studies and on the issues of religious studies that are directly relevant to our present day.

The periodical *Vallástudományi Szemle* [Reviews in Religious Studies] (editor-in-chief: Péter S. Szabó) was first published in the spring of 2005 at the Zsigmond Király College. It is a denominationally neutral journal that provides forum for academic research in religious studies, regardless of specialization or ideological basis. Its review section is equally important, monitoring new publications in the field. The *Wesley Theológiai és Vallástudományi Lapok* [Wesley

journal of theology and religious studies] published in electronic form since 2007 (editor-in-chief: Tamás Majsai) at the Wesley János Pastor Training College has a strong ecumenical approach and a responsibility towards creation-theology and pays special attention also to the history of Jewish-Christian relations, the Shoah, questions of Jewish present and past, the Romani, ecumene-theology, social ethics and interculturality.

*Orpheus Noster* is a periodical of cultural and religious history and the history of ideas (editor-in-chief: Bence Fehér) at the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, published since 2009. Its issues are mostly thematic, approaching the given topic from the viewpoints of historical studies, religious and ecclesiastic history, philosophy, philology, cultural anthropology and art history.

The religious-historical journal *Axis* (editor-in-chief: Ida Fröhlich) started in 2012 at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University and is related to the program of religious history within the doctoral school of historical studies. Its thematic issues bring mainly articles on the recent research in religious studies, on a denominationally neutral academic and professional basis.

In the discussed period there have also appeared a large number of volumes in religious studies. For the brevity's sake, only the major series are mentioned below, particularly those dealing with the history of the discipline in Hungary.

Since 1998, the *Studia Religiosa* series of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Szeged, has been purposefully aimed toward religious studies publishing current research in religious studies and religious history. The *Vallástudományi Könyvtár* [Library of religious studies] series of the L'Harmattan publishing house must be highlighted, with its editorial staff consisting of Mihány Hoppál, Ábrahám Kovács, András Máté-Tóth, Balázs Mezei, Imre Peres and Vilmos Voigt. Chronologically the first volume to mention is *Tanulmányok a Magyar vallástudomány történetéről* [Papers on the history of Hungarian religious studies], edited by Mihány Hoppál and Ábrahám Kovács and guided by the editorial principle to strive to shed a new light on certain important topics or persons in the past history of religious studies in Hungary. Part of the series is the work *Hitvédelem és egyháziasság* [Apologetics and ecclesiastics] by Ábrahám Kovács, which presents the debate between the new orthodoxy in Debrecen and liberal theology and thus has a singular emphasis on the beginnings of religious studies in Hungary and its early attempts to secede from theology. The volume *Szemelvények a Magyar vallástudomány történetéből I.—jeles szerzők 1860–1920* [Chapters from the history of religious studies in Hungary 1.—major authors 1860–1920] edited by Csaba Máté Sarnyai and András Máté-Tóth and the anthology *Jeles szerzők II: 1921–1945* [Major authors II: 1921–1945] are also closely connected to the history of



religious studies aiming at presenting and making available those Hungarian-language sources and data that seem crucial to the Hungarian religious studies but are otherwise hard to find. András Máté-Tóth's *Vallási kommunikáció és vallási diskurzus* [Religious Communication and Religious Discourse] rely on the contemporary international academic sources to elaborate on the features of religious communication and religious discourse. In addition, it also discusses the relevant ideas of such classics of religious studies as William James, Rudolf Otto, Martin Buber or Thomas Luckmann and from system-establishing authors of communication theory such as Jürgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu, Niklas Luhmann and Özséb Horányi. Mihály Hoppál's work *Mítosz és emlékezet* [Myth and Memory] meticulously traces the two titular key concepts in religious history.

Several volumes of the Károli Könyvek (Károli books) series, from the L'Harmattan publisher, are relevant to religious studies. The conference volume *Vallásfogalmak sokfélesége* [A variety of religion definitions] edited by Gábor Kendeffy and Rita Kopeczky concentrates on the concept of religion itself and strives to present as many branches and self-interpretations of religious studies as possible. Irén Lovász's book on *Sacred Communication* was published in the same series, its subject matter and methodology is halfway between cultural anthropology and religious studies as it is concerned with the general phenomenon of humans making contact with the supernatural power, appearing in forms that differ from culture to culture and from religion to religion. And finally, the conference volume *A spirituális közvetítő* [The Spiritual Mediator] has been published recently edited by Miklós Vassányi, Enikő Sepsi and Vilmos Voigt includes papers considering the mediator as an academic concept of religious studies, as someone chosen by their community of believers to maintain direct contact with the transcendent.

Three areas in religious studies are active in the recent decades. One is the classical philological approach studying and interpreting religious dimensions of Greek and Roman classical texts. This kind of scholarly tradition goes back a long way in Hungary and is represented by renowned scholars like Kerényi and others mentioned above. The second important approach is the ethnographical and the cultural anthropological one. Preserving cultural heritage including religious vernacular ties has long tradition in Hungary and is institutes on all academic levels. Research and conferences are conducted by many leading scholars of the field, like Mihály Hoppál, Gábor Barna, and others. National grants are offered for this kind of research and many international networks exist in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The third intensively cultivated field of religious studies is the history of religious institutions, which means church history from a non-theological approach.

Providing an overview of the history of *Religionswissenschaft* and on its recent situation should not avoid the question of the future of the discipline. On the structural level the discipline is implemented in the university structure although it needs more autonomous institutes with more full time staff. On higher academic level, e.g. on the Hungarian Academy of Science and on national research institutes, the field is not represented as discrete discipline and has therefore no direct links to bigger national funds.

## 9.2 *Conclusion*

In our first attempt to outline the Hungarian history of the study of religion we decided upon a periodic division, presenting some of the representative authors of each period whose works have played a determining role in Religious Studies written in Hungarian. Our choice of authors and their inclusion within the framework of international studies of religion will hopefully contribute to a more comprehensive study of the discipline's history. Finally we would like to emphasize three viewpoints that we consider necessary for further research. Firstly, except for the period between 1950–1990, and to some extent even then, Religious Studies written in Hungarian constitute an integral part of the discipline's international history, and the familiar political division between East and West is not applicable. Secondly, the history of Religious Studies needs to be examined following the periodic divisions known from the history of social sciences, and it is of the utmost importance to grasp the close interrelation between research in Religious Studies and the vectors of science, culture and politics of a given period. Finally, there is a need for a more detailed exploration of Religious Studies in Hungary in two fields: exploring the reception of international authors by periods, and exploring and interpreting the conceptual and structural impact among national authors. Hopefully our work so far, including this present overview, will contribute to the historical examination of the discipline, and provide further input for the clarification of contemporary theories of the discipline.